

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 and 19 are presented for further examination. Claims 2, 16, and 19 have been amended. Claim 18 has been canceled.

In the Final Office Action mailed November 14, 2006, the Examiner finally rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Litel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,260,376) in view of Wynn (U.S. Patent No. 6,092,868). Applicant respectfully disagrees with the basis for the rejection and requests reconsideration and further examination of the claims.

In remarks accompanying the rejection, the Examiner states that Litel et al. is silent on an armrest controller electrically coupled to the display screen and associated with a dental chair; directional speakers formed in a headrest and coupled to the controller for providing sound in limited directions; and software configured to provide access to a computer network and to enable patient navigation and dental staff access and management of information on the network.

The remarks further state that Wynn teaches such structures to be old, such as an armrest controller 17, 18, that can be electrically coupled to a display screen, directional speakers 28, 29 formed in the headrest and coupled to the controller for providing sound in limited directions, and software through a computer configured to provide access to a computer network 15 and web page of the service provider via the Internet, displaying images from the network, and inherently teaches capabilities of a touch screen, additional controllers remote from the armrest of the chair since it is an integrated computer, and a digital video camera. The Examiner provides no specific references to many of these features.

Applicant's undersigned representative has conducted a word search of the Wynn reference and can find no teaching or suggestion of many of these features. For example, applicant can find no teaching, suggestion, or any reference to a computer network, a remote controller, or a digital video camera. While there is an older style remote camera 80 shown in Figure 4 of Litel et al., there is no teaching or suggestion of integrating the same in an overhead light and display screen apparatus of either Litel et al. or Wynn. Moreover, Wynn is adapted to mount a laptop computer as described at column 4, lines 38-39. This is not a "computer network" as set forth in the claims. Moreover, Wynn does not teach additional controllers

remote from the armrest. Rather, at column 4, lines 34-37, Wynn specifically teaches that the controller is electrically connected to the motorized device in the same manner that the monitor 24 is “electrically connected to the computer 15” as described at column 3, lines 57-58. This is further borne out at column 4, lines 13-15, which describes the computer as having an electrical power outlet and a number of input jacks for attaching other peripherals and inputs to the computer.

Turning to the claims, claim 1 is directed to chair-side multimedia communication system for use by dental staff and a patient in a dental chair that includes a display screen having at least one intraoral operatory light, the display screen suspended over the chair to provide light into the patient’s mouth while allowing the dental staff to have access to the patient’s mouth without interference from the display screen and to give the patient unobstructed viewing of the display screen; an armrest controller electrically coupled to the display screen and associated with a dental chair; directional speakers formed in a headrest on the chair and coupled to the controller for providing sound in limited directions; and software configured to provide access to a computer network and to enable patient navigation and dental staff access and management of information on the network.

Nowhere do Litel et al. or Wynn taken alone or in any combination thereof teach or suggest the foregoing combination to include software configured to provide access to a computer network and to enable patient navigation and dental staff access and management of information on the network.

Moreover, Litel et al. describes a vertical column 20 having an extension 21 with a support housing 23 thereon to support a dental light fixture and cathode ray tube assembly. Litel et al. does not teach or suggest this structure being incorporated into the chair. There is no teaching or suggestion of how to incorporate such a structure into the chair in Wynn in such a manner as to allow dental access to the patient’s mouth without interference from the display screen and to give the patient unobstructed viewing of the display screen.

Independent claim 2 is directed to a patient communication system having a display screen with an intraoral operatory light suspended over a patient chair such that the display screen and intraoral operatory light are visible from the chair to provide unobstructed

viewing of the display screen by the patient and to provide light into the patient's mouth without interfering with access to the patient's mouth by the dental staff. Any combination of Litel et al. and Wynn would fail to meet this limitation of claim 2 because Wynn teaches placing a computer screen directly in front of the user on an arm depending from a side of the chair without any intraoral operatory light.

The Examiner asserts that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill to modify Litel et al. to include computer correlated services and capabilities as taught by Wynn since it would allow a patient to entertain himself or listen to soothing music while waiting and would allow both the patient and the dental staff access to his records, x-rays, work completed in previous office visits, etc. However, claim 2 recites the communication system further including a controller that provides patient access to a computer network. There is no teaching or suggestion in Wynn of coupling the computer to a network. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 2 is allowable.

Dependent claims 3-8 are allowable for the features recited therein as well as for the reasons why claim 2 is allowable. Moreover, the controllers remote from the armrest and the use of a digital video camera, for example, are not taught or suggested in Wynn.

Claim 9 recites features similar to independent claims 1 and 2 and includes a computer system coupled to the display screen and the controller for providing access to the Internet. Independent claim 14 similarly recites providing access to the Internet, and claim 16 recites providing access to a network. Applicant respectfully submits that all of these independent claims and all claims depending therefrom are allowable over the combination of Litel et al. and Wynn.

In view of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims remaining in this application are clearly in condition for allowance. In the event the Examiner finds minor informalities that can be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is urged to contact applicant's undersigned representative by telephone at (206) 622-4900 in order to expeditiously resolve prosecution of this application. Consequently, early and favorable action allowing these claims and passing this case to issuance is respectfully solicited.

Application No. 10/616,185  
Reply to Office Action dated November 14, 2006

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,

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